

## For Immediate Release

### **CORE Districts and Transforming Education announce plan to share open source tools to assess students' social-emotional skills**

**Sacramento, CA & Boston, MA** – [CORE Districts](#) (CORE) and [Transforming Education](#) (TransformEd) announced today that they will release a free, open source survey tool in Q1 of 2016 to help schools and districts assess students' [social-emotional skills](#). This survey tool represents a significant step forward in the effort to support the growing community of educational leaders and policymakers who see social-emotional skills as crucial to improving learning and college and career readiness. Already field tested with nearly 500,000 students in CA, the survey offers an important new resource for those who are committed to assessing social-emotional skills systematically using common measures that are valid, reliable, and scalable.

CORE and TransformEd will also make aggregated benchmark data on nearly 500,000 students available to other educators as part of an emerging set of national norms that can help educators interpret students' results on the survey-based assessments. Additionally, the two organizations will provide a number of resources, such as professional development "toolkits" created to support educators in building a deeper understanding of what social-emotional skills are, why they matter, how they are being measured, and how they can be developed in the classroom.

"CORE Districts are committed to a holistic approach to school improvement that focuses on social-emotional skills as a peer component to academic preparedness," said CORE Districts Executive Director Rick Miller. "We are excited by the progress toward making that a practical reality and committed to sharing our learnings and resources with districts and educators beyond our founding partners."

This announcement comes at a time when districts and states around the country are considering including measures of other competencies beyond academic skills into their formative and performance management systems. The CORE Districts operate under a federally approved ESEA waiver, which has enabled them to replace No Child Left Behind accountability with a more holistic and formative system that factors in students' social-emotional skills and measures of school culture/climate alongside academic outcomes. The US Department of Education recently approved the expansion of that waiver, enabling other districts across the state of California to opt into the CORE Districts system of accountability and continuous improvement.

"The CORE Districts want to build and refine a quality improvement system that sees children in all of their dimensions," said Mike Hanson, Superintendent of Fresno Unified School District and President of the CORE board. "We are proud to be a pioneer in large-scale deployment of measures that recognize students need social-emotional skills alongside academic ones. From the beginning, the CORE Districts' belief was 'public dollar, public good,' and we are happy to make our work and learnings with our partner TransformEd available to all to help students, schools, educators and communities succeed."

Rigorous longitudinal research has demonstrated that specific social-emotional competencies have a significant impact on students' academic performance and persistence in school, as well as their health, wealth, and well-being outcomes throughout life. "The future of American education requires policies that support educators and communities in building all of the skills students need to thrive," said Linda Darling-Hammond. "Social-emotional learning is a key part of this agenda; it is exciting to see tools that

can help educators understand and support these competencies in students by providing valuable formative information that supports this work.”

As part of its partnership with CORE Districts initiated in 2013, TransformEd developed and continues to curate the set of survey-based social-emotional measures that will be incorporated into CORE’s School Quality Improvement System, drawing from the work of leading researchers in the field who serve on TransformEd’s National Advisory Board. The four competencies included in the survey are self-management, growth mindset, social awareness and self-efficacy. The CORE Districts piloted the measures with ~10,000 students in 2014 and then field tested them with ~500,000 students across six public school districts in 2015. Field test analyses conducted by Professor Marty West of Harvard confirm that it is feasible to reliably assess student social-emotional competencies at scale through student self-report and teacher report surveys. The student self-report survey used took approximately 20 minutes to administer and was statistically significantly predictive of important student outcomes such as GPA, test scores, attendance, and suspensions. The full results of the field test will be released in Q1 of 2016.

“TransformEd aims to help education systems effectively incorporate key intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies into educational policy and practice,” said TransformEd co-founder and Executive Director Sara Bartolino Krachman. “We believe that leading with measurement allows educators to understand the strengths and challenges of their schools and students in data-driven ways. Using a common set of social-emotional measures also enables educators to understand which of their existing efforts to help students build social-emotional skills are most effective and then use that information to improve student outcomes. While research will continue to refine measurement approaches and reveal the best ways to help students improve their social-emotional skills, our work with CORE Districts has demonstrated that it is practical to start measuring and learning more about social-emotional skills now.”

Interested education leaders can learn more at the websites of both TransformEd and CORE Districts and can [sign up now to get further information](#) as it becomes available leading up to the general release of the survey instruments in Q1 2016.

### **About CORE Districts**

CORE Districts is a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve student achievement by fostering highly-productive, meaningful collaboration and learning between its 9 member school districts: Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento City, San Francisco, Sanger and Santa Ana Unified. Together these districts serve more than one million students and their families.

### **About Transforming Education**

TransformEd is a non-profit that partners with researchers and school systems to translate the latest research on intrapersonal and interpersonal skills into actionable policies and practices that support student success. TransformEd serves as the lead strategic advisor to CORE for the design and rollout of the social-emotional component of the School Quality Improvement System.

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